

SPiRiT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics—Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

THE ADMINISTRATION AND SOUTHERN POLITICS.

From the N. Y. Nation.

There is a good deal of discussion going on about the letters Messrs. Boutwell and other members of the Cabinet have thought proper to write to Tennessee, expressing their preference for Stokes over Senter for the governorship of the State—Stokes representing the policy of continued proscription, and Senter that of immediate enfranchisement of the ex- Rebels, numbering in all, it is said, about 100,000. The sympathies of the various members of the administration in the case of Virginia have not been so openly manifested, but whatever Grant's may be—and they are said to incline to Walker—the relation of the two parties in Virginia so closely resembles those of the two parties in Tennessee, that we can hardly err in placing Messrs. Boutwell and Creswell on the side of Wells.

These are two objections to members of the Cabinet writing letters of encouragement, or otherwise taking part in State elections at the South, which are both worth the consideration. One is that the opinion of members of the Cabinet as to the way in which Republicans should vote in Tennessee, or any other State, is worth no more than the opinion of any other citizen of another State, of mature age and fair capacity, who has never lived in Tennessee, and has no special knowledge of the temper of the people, of the drift of popular feeling, of the necessities of the day, and of the character of the local politicians. Mr. Boutwell and Mr. Creswell, in other words, know no more about the way a Republican should vote in Tennessee than Mr. Senter knows about how a man should vote in New York. They know that they do not know it, and the Tennesseeans all know it, and indeed everybody knows it. They have no special acquaintance with Tennesseean politics, and, per se, their letters, if they were them in private life, or even as members of Congress, would simply be a piece of impertinence, to which the State voters would pay no heed. Indeed, we risk nothing in saying that Mr. Boutwell or Mr. Creswell hardly expects anybody in Tennessee to vote for his opinion, as an opinion. What he expects is that his letter will influence people—but through their fears, not through their judgment.

Other words, the reason why the opinions of these two gentlemen about the Tennesseean election are of such importance is, that one of them appoints all the postmasters and the other all the revenue assessors and collectors and inspectors, and so forth, in the State, and, consequently, can remove the persons now filling those places. Were it not for this, the opinions of Mr. Fish, or Mr. Robeson, or General Sheridan, or Mr. Hoar would be just as valuable as theirs. What they really mean when they recommend Stokes for the suffrages of Tennessee voters is not simply that, in their estimation, Stokes is the best man for the governorship, but that if any Federal office-holder in Tennessee fails to "swear" for Stokes, or to "graduate" for him, he will be made to "rotate" in his office in such a way that the office will become vacant, and another citizen of more zeal be called to fill it. In fact, their letters are simply threats to abuse the patronage at their disposal for the purpose of influencing a political contest which concerns them no more than any other American citizen, and concerns them far less than it concerns the voters in Tennessee, and about the merits of which they are not well informed, and in which any mistake on their part would do incalculable mischief. We pass over with a mere mention the obvious fact, that the duties of those who are charged with the management-in-chief of the Treasury and Post Office of the United States are just now of such magnitude that it is no disparagement to either Mr. Boutwell or Mr. Creswell to say, that men of twice their ability and powers of work, great as these may be, would find in them full employment for all their faculties of whatever nature.

The second objection is that their interference helps to maintain and stimulate the feeling of antagonism and mistrust between the mass of the Southern people and the Federal Government, which is one of the great difficulties of reconstruction. A State once admitted to the Union, the punishment of any portion of its population for having taken part in the Rebellion cannot be the duty of the administration or of anybody connected with it. Even if we admit it is a matter of concern to the Federal Government that the franchise in every State should be impartially bestowed, it is not a matter of concern to it, and it ought not to act as if it were, that a certain portion of the population should be disfranchised for past offenses. In so far as Congress has not provided for anything of the kind, the matter ought to be left in the hands of the people of the State, who understand it. Attempts on the part of officers of the General Government to secure a continuance of a policy of proscription, against the wishes and the judgment of the Southern people, are therefore ill-judged as well as indecent, and are calculated to prolong hatred and distrust of the United States amongst that immense and influential class of the Southern people—the men and women who sided and abetted in the Rebellion, and their children. If this were a despotic government, it would make no difference how these people feel or were likely to feel; but as it is a democratic republic, it is, we submit, our duty and our interest to try to placate them, and would be, though they were all possessed by devils, "the time for punishment of Rebels, was far as regards the Federal Government, was during the continuance of military rule, and the place for punishment were the courts." The opportunities thus presented having passed away, all talk of the matter had better cease. We do not expect Mr. Boutwell to give offices to Rebels or Democrats, but we do expect him not to use his patronage to help to divide the Republican party at a State election on a question of disfranchisement.

In this, as in many similar cases, Mr. Boutwell, as well as many other Republicans, does not seem to have ever asked himself a question which all politicians ought to ask themselves every hour, and that is, "What practical good will result from what I am doing?" The good end in view, in all the whole process of reconstruction, is to bring back the Southern people as speedily as possible to free allegiance—that is, allegiance to the heart to the United States. Keeping the most influential portion of the community disfranchised, therefore, could only be justified on the ground that it would promote love of human equality and of the Union amongst the disfranchised. To believe that it would have this effect, it would be necessary to disregard all we know of human nature and of history. The natural effect of proscription is

to excite hatred and discontent. It is only justifiable as a means of security—but this can never be so long as the proscribed have a near prospect of coming into power. So that to make further exclusion of the Southern whites from a share in the Government a measure that will bear examination, we ought to make it perpetual. Military government, in short, may have its uses, and may do good; but class government, whether based on loyalty, cast or color, is sure to breed bad passions, and if they exist already, runs a fair chance of making them perennial. Men will almost always sooner be governed by a dictator than by neighbors they detest.

WEST POINT.

From the N. Y. World.

The report of the late board of visitors to the United States Military Academy bears equal witness to the care with which it has been prepared and to the ability and independence of the eminent scholar upon the board to whom, doubtless, we mainly owe it, and who has every right to be heard respectfully upon all subjects pertaining to education.

The board have deserved well in departing from the blind panegyric which we have been used to see in official reports upon West Point. It is a common enough belief that we have the first military school in the world. Rigid comparisons would easily show that we have not. And even if we had, we have not realized the ideal of a military school, and, until we have, indiscriminate praise can do nothing but harm.

Looked at purely as a place of professional education, West Point has this grave defect, that it has a Procrustean standard to which all pupils must be stretched or shortened to fit. There is a careful weeding, to be sure, of the lazy and the grossly incapable, but even at the end of the course the interval between the head of a class and the tail is immense. At one end are young men perfectly prepared to go into the most intricate problems of the military art and "to be heard," as the board puts it "only to the boundaries of knowledge" upon military subjects. At the other are men who have just managed to pull through the course, and who have struggled with a dislike and an impatience for its higher departments. Their heads are full of things which they have been at infinite pains to acquire, but which they can with entire ease forget, and which, in the line of the army, will never be of any use to them. Nevertheless, they may be as fit for the routine duties of the service as the eager students at the head of the class, whose ardor for military knowledge has not been wholly satisfied by the academic course, but who would be glad to go on far beyond it. But the pace of the curriculum is the pace of the slowest horse, and some are urged beyond their strength while some have not had their fair trial. In Europe, notably in France, this problem is solved by the establishment of separate schools for the different arms of the service. With us, it is partially solved by sending promising engineers to West Point and promising artillerymen to Fortress Monroe for what is in fact, though not in name, a post-graduate course. But by this device the graduates lose the benefit of academic instruction, which should seem they ought to have. The board propose to solve the problem by setting up a special course within the academy itself for the more forward cadets, and by graduating them by consequence, into what may be called the scientific branches of the service. With the resources available, this is perhaps the best expedient we can adopt. But the instruction given in this manner would not be equal to that of a special school, with its special staff and selected students. But by whatever means the end is to be secured, it is certainly desirable to have different courses adapted to the differences of the youthful mind and the different requirements of the various arms. By this means, too, government would spare itself the maintenance and instruction of the youth who, after two or three years, find that they cannot master the present course, and are sent back into society with a stigma which sticks to them, more or less, all their lives. With a less exacting general course, most of these might succeed, and become useful and even brilliant officers; and with a more exacting special course, they would at least be hindered from hampering the progress of brighter men.

As a place of education, in the general sense, the deficiencies of West Point are still more marked. The board especially and justly animadvert on the low standard for admission. Surely, at the age at which boys are admitted to the academy, more preparation ought to be demanded of them than that they be able to read and spell, and apply the four ground rules of arithmetic. Nine out of ten of them, it is safe to say, do more than this. Yet, for the sake of the ignorant tenth boy, the nine are forced to waste a good part of the first year in mere review. An education, in the scholastic sense, they do not receive. The want of elegance, or even the facility of expression, which the board note, is directly attributable to this cause. That the course is strictly military is not an answer to this objection. For a clear and concise style of expression is equally necessary to a soldier as to a civilian. It may be said that the military schools of Europe do not provide for this literary element in their courses of instruction. No more they do; but they insist upon it as a preliminary. A candidate for admission to St. Cyr, or the Polytechnique, is required to pass a general examination of very wide scope—an examination so thorough that it is doubtful if the average graduate of West Point could sustain it.

THE LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF THE INCOME TAX.

From the N. Y. Times.

All taxes are unpopular. A new tax, till we are accustomed to it, is specially unpopular. The tax upon incomes is to Americans a comparatively new and unfamiliar order, and therefore seems to be the least acceptable. It yields, however, from fifty to sixty millions of dollars yearly. Could that amount of money be raised in any other more acceptable way? That is a large sum of money to take out of people's pockets, and we doubt if any method could be invented for making people enjoy the abstraction. Is there any more equitable tax levied? It weighs upon profits, upon surplus, and not upon necessities—upon capital rather than upon labor. It weighs upon this effect, it would be necessary to disregard all we know of human nature and of history. The natural effect of proscription is

bears upon families almost entirely irrespective of their resources. A house-holder on an income of \$2000 a year, pays nearly as much duty upon what he consumes in his family, per head, as Mr. Astor. If a man is prosperous his income tax increases, if he is unfortunate it diminishes. He is only required to pay the more when he can best afford to pay the more. It is complained that the taxables sometimes make false returns, or, by collusion with unfaithful officers, evade their fair share of this burden. One of our contemporaries gave a list of wealthy citizens whose returns did not correspond with their reputed means.

Some of these cases received satisfactory explanations; doubtless all were susceptible of explanation. But whether they were or not, has any system of taxation been yet devised which crafty avarice will not sometimes succeed in evading? And has any system been invented for raising so considerable a revenue which admits of being so righteously executed?

The taxable who makes a false return commits a criminal act, but the chief sinner is the agent of the Government who permits it. He has the means in his hands of knowing every man's income with substantial accuracy. If the Government fails to select faithful agents, it certainly will not receive all the revenues that its due either from customs or from whisky or from tobacco, any more than it will from income. If it does select faithful agents, there is no tax through which the percentage of waste from fraud or error need be so inconsiderable. This the experience of England has demonstrated, and it is today the main secret of England's financial credit.

We have then in the income tax the two great, transcending merits of a tax combined, the maximum of revenue with the minimum of burden and the minimum of waste. But it is inquisitive, say some. It is inquisitive to the extent necessary to ascertain what share of the public burden the taxpayer is competent to carry. That knowledge is necessary for the protection of the great mass of the community who are otherwise liable to have their burdens unequally distributed. The knowledge required to tax justly certainly cannot be deemed excessive; we go further, and say that it cannot be dispensed with, and our chief complaint against most other methods of taxation is, that they are applied without knowledge, and, therefore, without sufficient regard to the resources of the tax-payer. Besides, we see no good reason, except in rare and exceptional cases, why a person should object to disclosing his income, unless he desires to obtain a credit unwarrantably beyond his merits, and, therefore, likely to abuse. That is a class we need not go out of our way to protect.

The publicity given to the returns is offensive and objectionable, but it grows out of a propensity of the press to personal gossip which the public delights in, and which, therefore, the public must pay for. It would be difficult to put any legal penalties upon this sort of publicity, without removing a salutary check upon collusion between the tax-payers and unfaithful collectors. In view of all these considerations, had not those parties who pay income tax and who, of course, furnish all the malcontents, better reflect whether they are likely to be provided with any more agreeable way of raising fifty or sixty millions of dollars, and if not, whether they had better do what they can to reconcile themselves and their neighbors to its continuance? They may go further and fare worse.

DRAMATIC VICTIMS.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

It is an old story that the gentleman who came home drunk from a dinner party charged his misfortune to that last pickled oyster. Nobody is ever willing to acknowledge the exact cause of a shameful failure. In theatrical life, especially, this truth finds frequent and apt illustration. No player ever fails for want of ability. Either the public is stupid, and cannot appreciate, or the critics have formed a conspiracy to condemn. Usually, we have observed, there has been a conspiracy. It is quite awful to reflect, indeed, upon the number of dramatic victims who have thus been immolated. The field of journalism is strewn with their whitening bones. One would imagine that the critics of the stage have nothing else to do but to form conspiracies against the heroes and heroines of the theatre. Lately, it appears, they have conspired against a certain troupe of burlesque performers. This we learn from that usually feigned and immensely untrustworthy source of home news, the provincial press. We had already seen this troupe had gradually fizzled out in New York, like a bad pin-wheel, and had left anything but a pleasant odor behind it. And this result we had attributed to its real and very obvious cause—the puerility and indecency into which (after a pleasant and promising start) its performances degenerated. But it now appears, from the out-of-town papers, that we were mistaken. It was not the cold punch that made the gentleman a little vague; it was "that last pickled oyster." It was not a parade of bare legs, indecent gestures, and general grossness and foolishness, which made the burlesquers a nuisance on the stage; it was the conspiracy of the journalists! Worse than all these journalists did not conspire of their own free will, but they were "manipulated" into this direful coalition against "the blondes" by a gentleman who lives in the country! The Boston Courier is bounteous enough to divulge this startling fact, and to give the indignant public a glimpse of this dark and ugly Philip the Second, in his rural essential. He is, it seems, "an ex-manager, a man of some attainments, a great diner, a member of two or three clubs, great on suppers, who owns a country-seat just beyond the city limits, where congregate the critics of the daily press, the journalists, the feuilletonists, the critics, the dilettanti, and an educated man, clearly here, indeed, is a broad daylight where a man who is both "a great diner" and "great on suppers" possesses fascinations which no journalist can resist. For, are we not all "enny-enny-diners" and always "hungry"?

Did anybody ever hear of a journalist who couldn't easily be bought with an oyster-stew? Of course not; and nobody, therefore, will be surprised to read that this agricultural Epicurus "can manipulate any newspaper in New York." Here, then, we come to the fact of the matter—"This gentleman had a personal acquaintance with the Thompson troupe, shortly after they appeared at Niblo's, and when the history of the way on the boards shall be truthfully written it will appear that he laid all the trains, wrote or caused to be written nearly all the adverse articles, and secured their publication, through his ring, at the clubs and at his country-seat." We shall await, with as much fortitude as possible, the advent of that "truthfully written history" which is daily promised in these tremendous lines. It will, of course, come from Boston. Everything luscious naturally proceeds out of that Nazareth. In the meantime, as we reflect upon the

luxurious servitude into which our brethren of the quill have manifestly fallen, we drop the tear of sensibility upon their manipulated condition, and crave the indulgence of a hungry sinner, to err is human if it be to dine, especially if it be to dine with Minnie, Cincinnati, and Machiavelli rolled into one. Besides, the reflection that the blondes have been vindicated ought to incline the public mind to mercy. They did not walk about like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They did not wriggle and caper in the can-can. They did not exhale an odor of vulgarity which has infected the robes of the whole dramatic profession, so that many seasons of fumigation will be required to make those garments sweet. On the contrary, they were everything that is lovely—only they offended a country gentleman, and he laid them waste by manipulating the New York press. Alas, that pickled oyster!

THE PENNSYLVANIA MANUFACTURERS AND COAL-MINE OWNERS.

From the N. Y. World.

In March, 1848, during the anticipated charter riots in London, there were 20,000 special constables sworn. An amusing cartoon came out in Punch. Mr. Punch, as a "special," addressed a ruffian charist thus:—"If I kill you, it is nothing at all; but if you kill me, it is murder." The Pennsylvania manufacturers, through their high and low protection parties, address the coal-mine interest in a very similar style. They substantially say:—"If you have to pay us \$40 a ton for iron which is worth only \$30, 50 cents a pound for blankets which are worth only 28 cents, or 100 per cent. more for steel goods, cotton goods, and leather goods, all this is nothing at all, because the Keystone State is the United States, and we are in reality the Key."

But if you and your dirty collars come any of your combination game, co-operation game, or any other game, and raise the price of coal on us, you commit "murder," and as soon as Congress meets we'll combine with our virtuous Eastern brethren who have been long "down on you," and we will take off the duty on foreign coal, and you shall dangle and have no tariff to dance on. That such a project of reducing or entirely abolishing the tariff on coal is agitated now we are all aware. But to reduce the duty on coal alone, or on any other raw material, without putting the pruning-knife to all the four thousand articles of our imports, would be class legislation in still worse form than we have it now. The oppressive price of coal, by the aid of the tariff, is no greater wrong than the oppressive price of blankets, woollens, cloths, cottons, hardware, iron, steel, copper, brass, etc., all upheld by the aid of the tariff. The people want no small favors and no large favors; let us have justice, one law for the rich and poor, and no class legislation for the benefit of rich manufacturers, money grabbers, and monopolists—and if we cannot have that, then by all means let us stick to the outrageous bad laws we now have, and strictly enforce them, which, according to the maxim of the second father and savior of the great republic, is the only patriotic and statesmanlike way to remedy the evil. No doubt the operation, until we do attain the remedy, is painful. But, like the valorous Davy, who convinced his rival that the vow to skin him was imperative, that the rule of the service demanded it, so we should not object to be skinned by the bad laws of our country, as the rule of the service is imperative—uphold bad laws and you will get good ones.

WINE.

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COLUMBIA HOUSE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J., opposite the Surf House, is now open. Terms to suit the times. EDWARD DOYLE, Proprietor.

THE SHAEFLER HOTEL, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J., the best location on the island, with an A. N. 1 table, and the best attention paid to its guests. Eighty fine sleeping chambers, with bath, and every modern convenience. ALOIS SCHAEFLER, Proprietor.

COTTAGE RETREAT, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J., is now open, enlarged and improved. Spring bath throughout the establishment. Rooms for invalids. Terms moderate. MRS. MCCLURE, Proprietress.